

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 027009

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. LEBANON

A. BATTLES ARE MAINLY POLITICAL

EMBASSY BEIRUT SAYS SECURITY IS IMPROVING THERE, AND POLITICAL BARGAINING OVER THE FORM AND SUBSTANCE OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT OCCUPIES THE MINDS OF POLITICAL LEADERS. ACTIVE ON THE POLITICAL SCENE ARE:

--JUMBLATT, WHOSE FANCY FOOTWORK APPEARS AIMED AT BECOMING PRIME MINISTER OR SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT;

--KARAME, WHOSE STATEMENTS ON THE FRANGIE-ASAD-KARAME SUMMIT INDICATE THE SYRIANS WILL GUARANTEE PALESTINIAN GOOD BEHAVIOR; AND

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--THE CABINET, WHICH IS STILL TRYING TO FORMULATE A SETTLEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO THE MARONITES BEFORE FIRING UP THE FRANGIE TRIP TO DAMASCUS.

EMBASSY COMMENT: THIS IS THE LEBANON THAT VETERANS OF THE PAST KNOW AND LOVE; WITH THE SYRIANS STILL HARD AT WORK AND THE LEBANESE SENSE OF THE ABSURD EVIDENTLY RETURNING SLOWLY, THERE IS SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR HOPE THAT A LASTING POLITICAL CONSENSUS CAN BE REACHED, DESPITE THE SLIPPAGE WE ARE WITNESSING.

B. SUSPICION OVER LONG-TERM SYRIAN INTENTIONS

THE JANUARY 31 ATTACKS ON TWO BEIRUT NEWSPAPERS CARRIED OUT BY THE SYRIAN-SPONSORED SA'IQA HAVE GENERATED:

--CONDEMNATION FROM ALL SECTORS; AND,

--THE SUSPICION THAT THE SYRIANS INTEND TO EXTEND THEIR RESIDUAL INFLUENCE OVER LEBANON.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WE DO NOT FIND CONVINCING EVIDENCE TO JUSTIFY THIS SUSPICION. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THE SYRIANS, HAVING RESCUED LEBANON FROM ITS SPECIAL KIND OF HELL, WILL DEPART WITHOUT EXACTING SOME PRICE WHICH WILL PERMIT DAMASCUS TO PREVENT A REPETITION OF PAST STRIFE. (CONFIDENTIAL) BEIRUT 1065, 2/2; BEIRUT 1091 AND 1100, 2/3.)

2. KISSINGER-BRANDT EXCHANGE: THE SPD DEFENDS ITSELF

EMBASSY BONN BELIEVES THE SPD WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR LEAKING THE BRANDT-KISSINGER EXCHANGE ON COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. DER SPIEGEL CITED THE KISSINGER LETTER AS PROOF THE SECRETARY IS NOT CRITICAL OF THE SPD, WHICH WAS UNDER FIRE BECAUSE OF BRANDT'S DEFENSE OF "INFORMATIONAL CONTACTS" BETWEEN EUROPEAN LEADERS AND THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF THEIR COUNTRIES. (CONFIDENTIAL) BONN 1838, 2/3.) INGERSOLL

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